

# THE DEMONSTRATIVES IN *TATA BAHASA BAKU BAHASA INDONESIA*: A CRITICAL ANALYSIS

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## Abstrak

Dalam buku *Tata Bahasa Baku Bahasa Indonesia* edisi ketiga (Alwi dkk. 2000), disebutkan bahwa kata *itu* dan *ini* digolongkan dalam ‘pronomina penunjuk umum.’ Sebagai pronomina, *itu* dan *ini* adalah nomina induk dan tidak bersifat atributif. Namun demikian, dalam buku itu disebutkan bahwa *itu* dan *ini* sebagai pronomina dapat bersifat atributif. Definisi itu cukup membingungkan karena sebagai pronomina, *itu* dan *ini* mengacu pada referen, sedangkan *itu* dan *ini* yang bersifat atributif tidak mengacu pada referen. Hal lain yang dianalisis dalam makalah ini adalah kata *anu*, yang juga didefinisikan sebagai pronomina penunjuk.

*Kata-kata kunci:* pronominal, nomina induk, atributif, referen

## INTRODUCTION

Many scholars define demonstratives as elements in language that have a deictic meaning (Lyons 1977, Bühler 1982, Fillmore 1982, Diessel 1999, Alwi et al 2000). According to this perspective, demonstratives are associated with spatial deixis, in that the location of the speaker or hearer plays an important role in identifying a referent at the moment of utterance. Many languages make a two-way distinction between demonstratives, and this distinction has often been described in the literature in terms of distance. In English, for example, the form *that* has been called ‘distal’ while the form *this* has been called ‘proximal,’ based on the spatial location of the speaker at the moment of speech. *That* is said to involve something that is distant from the speaker, and *this* for a referent that is close to the speaker. In Indonesian, similarly, the demonstratives *itu* ‘that’ and *ini* ‘this’ have also been described as distance-based (Kaswanti Purwo 1984, Sneddon 1996, Alwi et al 2000).

This paper is a critical analysis of the demonstratives described in *Tata Bahasa Baku Bahasa Indonesia*, an Indonesian grammar book compiled by Alwi et al (2000). To be more specific, it describes the existing confusion of how the demonstrative pronouns and demonstrative determiners are defined in the book. It is the writer’s hope that the analysis drawn in this paper will contribute to the updated version of *Tata Bahasa Baku Bahasa Indonesia*, especially the section on the demonstratives.

## 1. THE DEMONSTRATIVES IN TATA BAHASA BAKU

### BAHASA INDONESIA

*Tata Bahasa Baku Bahasa Indonesia* – which was compiled by Alwi et al (2000) – is the third edition of a grammar book produced by *Pusat Pembinaan dan Pengembangan Bahasa, Departemen Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan* ‘The National Centre for Language Development and Cultivation, Department of Education and Culture.’ The book is meant as a reference for educated people who are eager to learn the standard use of Indonesian (2000: xiii). The slogan proposed by the language planners, *Gunakan bahasa Indonesia yang baik dan benar* ‘Use the Indonesian language appropriately and correctly,’ has encouraged some prescriptive grammarians to provide the standard rules of grammar for users of the language. The book contains a description of standard Indonesian grammar compiled by a number of Indonesian linguists. In what follows, I will refer to the book as *TBBBI*.

In spite of the fact that the book presents a comprehensive description of the standard use of Indonesian grammar, it provides very little discussion of the grammatical use of *itu* and *ini*. The demonstratives *itu* and *ini* are labelled as *pronomina penunjuk umum* ‘general deictic pronominals’. This term emphasises the situational function of the demonstratives. It is claimed that the distal pronominal *itu* is used to refer to a referent that is far from the speaker’s or writer’s standpoint, to a past event, or a previously mentioned referent. The proximal pronominal *ini*, in contrast, is for reference to an object that is close to the speaker or writer, a future event, or a cataphoric referent (2000: 260). The examples of *itu* and *ini* as deictic pronominals from *TBBBI* are as follows (2000: 261):

- (1) *Ini/itu* rumah saya ‘This/that is my house’
- (2) *Dia membeli ini/itu* kemarin ‘He/she bought this/that yesterday’
- (3) *Jawaban dia ini/itu* ‘His/her answer is (was) this/that’

Despite the fact that *TBBBI* gives functions other than spatial use for *itu* and *ini*, this book does not provide any examples for those other uses. Moreover, demonstrative pronouns and demonstrative determiners are conflated in this book, in the sense that demonstrative pronouns are sometimes treated to have an attributive function. This conflict is shown in the following:

*Pronomina yang bersifat atributif diletakkan sesudah kata atau frasa yang diterangkan. Fungsi utama pemakaian seperti itu adalah untuk menandai akhir konstruksi frasa dalam kalimat. Oleh karena itu, jika frasa itu mendapat keterangan lain, maka ini/itu selalu mundur dan berada di ujung kanan. Bila keterangan itu panjang, kata yang lalu muncul* (Alwi et al 2000: 261).

‘A pronominal that has an attributive function occurs after a word or phrase that it modifies. The main function of its use is to mark the end of a phrasal construction in a sentence. Because of that, when the phrase has another modifier, then (the position of) *ini/itu* is always pushed back and *ini/itu* will be located at the

very end (of the phrase). When the modifier is long, then usually the word *yang* ‘that, which, who, whom, whose’ will appear’

This definition creates a number of problematic interpretations of the functional distinction between a demonstrative pronoun and a demonstrative determiner. First, a demonstrative pronoun is functionally conflated with a demonstrative determiner. According to *TBBBI*, *ini* and *itu* are deictic pronominals, but they can be used attributively. Second, it is not always clear whether the attributive function of the so called pronominal demonstrative will affect the entire meaning of a noun phrase it modifies, especially when the noun phrase consists of a head noun modified by a *yang* clause (relative clause). The following examples are from *TBBBI* (2000: 261):

- (4) ***Pohon ini/itu ditanam oleh Reinwardt*** ‘This/that tree was planted by Reinwardt’
- (5) ***Pohon yang ada di tengah-tengah Kebun Raya Bogor itu ditanam oleh Reinwardt*** ‘The tree that is located in the middle of *Bogor Botanical Garden* was planted by Reinwardt’

Both (4) and (5) are constructed examples and are out of context. They are therefore ambiguous. The demonstrative *ini/itu* in (4) may be treated as having a deictic interpretation, in the sense that *ini/itu* is used to modify the referent of *pohon* ‘tree’ that is either close to or far away from the speaker’s standpoint. But it is also possible that *ini/itu* is used to mark *pohon* ‘tree’ that has been mentioned in previous discourse. In (5), it is not clear whether the demonstrative *itu* has a deictic function or any other function. *TBBBI* does mention, however, that when a noun phrase is modified by a relative clause, and the relative clause ends with a noun phrase followed by a demonstrative, then the meaning of the entire phrase will be ambiguous (2000: 262). The demonstrative *itu* in (5), for example, follows a relative clause that ends with a proper name *Kebun Raya Bogor* ‘Bogor Botanical Garden’. In this example, *itu* can be interpreted as modifying the proper name or the entire noun phrase *pohon yang ada di tengah-tengah Kebun Raya Bogor* ‘tree that is located in the middle of Bogor Botanical Garden’. Note that in Indonesian, a proper name or a personal pronoun can be modified by a demonstrative determiner.

Another questionable interpretation is the claim that *itu* can function as either a deictic pronominal or a subject modifier if the predicate of the sentence is a nominal:

[...] *jika suatu kalimat berpredikat nominal, kata itu dapat berfungsi sebagai pronomina penunjuk atau sebagai pewatas subjek saja* (Alwi et al 2000: 262).

[...] when a sentence is predicated by a nominal, the word *itu* can function as a deictic pronominal or just as a subject modifier’

It is not clear what *TBBBI* means by *berpredikat nominal* ‘predicated by a nominal’, as the example provided for this claim does not show that the predicate is a nominal. Observe that the predicate *mahal* ‘expensive’ in (6) is an adjective, and not a nominal (2000: 262):

- (6) ***Rumah itu mahal sekarang*** ‘That house is expensive now’

*TBBBI* further mentions that *itu* in (6) may have two different functions. First, it functions as a deictic pronominal if it refers to a particular house, which is visible for the interlocutors. Second, it functions as a *pewatas subjek* ‘subject modifier’ if it refers to houses and prices in general terms (2000: 262). In other words, *itu* is called as a pronominal when it has a deictic or situational function, but as a modifier when it emphasises the non-situational function of the demonstrative, in this case a generic function. As stated earlier, I am of the opinion that *TBBBI* has conflated the functional uses of a demonstrative pronoun and a demonstrative determiner. In my view, *itu* in (6) is not a deictic pronominal, because a pronominal is used to replace a noun or a noun phrase. It is not referential, either, because it is functioning as a modifier. This is similar to the case of English in which the demonstrative determiners *this*, *that*, *these*, *those* and the article *the* are also seen as having no referential quality of their own. As Halliday and Hasan (1976: 70-71) put it:

[...] *the* in many ways resembles the demonstratives [...]. Essentially *the*, like the demonstratives, is a specifying agent, serving to identify a particular individual or subclass within the class designated by the noun; but it does this only through dependence on something else – it contains no specifying element of its own.

Thus, for Halliday and Hasan (1976) the article *the* as well as the demonstrative determiners *this*, *that*, *these*, *those* are not referential; they merely indicate that the intended referent “is specific and identifiable; that somewhere the information necessary for identifying it is recoverable” (Halliday and Hasan 1976: 71). Similarly, when the Indonesian demonstratives *ini* and *itu* function as determiners, they are not referential. Rather, they help hearers to identify a particular referent expressed by a noun phrase.

Apart from the pronominal and attributive functions previously described, *TBBBI* argues that the distal *itu* can be used as a subject modifier for a generic noun. For this generic use, *itu* is optional provided that it is replaced by a functional pause, as shown in the following (2000: 262-263):

- (7a) **Harimau itu binatang liar** ‘Tigers are wild animals’  
(7b) *Harimau / binatang liar* (/ = a pause)

Examples (7a) and (7b) demonstrate that the subject semantically entails its predicate. According to *TBBBI*, this indicates that *itu* in (7a) does not refer to a particular tiger but tigers in general (2000: 262-263). However, when the subject does not entail its predicate, as exemplified in (8a) and (8b) below, *itu* is obligatory (2000: 262-263):

- (8a) **Binatang liar itu harimau** ‘The wild animal is a tiger’  
(8b) \**Binatang liar / harimau*

*TBBBI* claims that the obligatoriness of *itu* in (8a) indicates that *itu* is not a subject modifier but a deictic pronominal. This has again created some functional confusion between a demonstrative pronoun and a demonstrative determiner.

Lastly, the conflicting use between a deictic pronominal and demonstrative determiner is also shown in the following claim:

*Dalam suatu wacana pronomina penunjuk itu dipakai untuk merujuk ke suatu maujud yang telah disebutkan sebelumnya (Alwi et al 2000: 263).*

‘In discourse, a deictic pronominal can be used to refer to a previously mentioned referent’

The above statement suggests that when *itu* functions as a pronoun, it can be used to refer to an anaphoric referent. However, the example that is presented to illustrate the statement does not indicate that *itu* is a pronoun:

- (9a) *Dahulu kala ada seorang raja yang bengis* ‘Once upon a time there was a fierce king’  
(9b) *Raja itu suka menganiaya rakyatnya* ‘The king liked to mistreat his people’

In example (9b) *itu* is not a pronoun but a determiner, and so it does not refer to a referent. It is the modified noun, in this case *raja itu* ‘that king’, that refers to a referent. *Itu* in *raja itu* ‘that king’ is a signal of identity or identifiability (Halliday and Hasan 1976: 72); it only signals the identifiability of the referent, after its previous mention in the form *seorang raja yang bengis* ‘a fierce king’.

I believe that the problem about the demonstratives *itu* and *ini* in *TBBBI* mainly lies on the use of one linguistic term for two contrasting syntactic functions. *TBBBI* claims that the demonstratives *itu* and *ini* are deictic pronominals that have both pronominal function and attributive function. Syntactically, a pronominal acts as a head noun and cannot serve an attributive function. I also observe that *TBBBI* only has two functional categories of demonstratives – deictic pronominal and subject modifier – when demonstrative uses are actually more complex. A deictic pronominal is used for situational purposes, and a subject modifier is used to indicate generic and anaphoric functions.

*TBBBI* (2000: 260-261) also claims that apart from *itu* and *ini*, there is a third deictic pronominal, *anu*. Observe the following:

- (10) *Kemarin aya beli anu – itu yang dipakai untuk potong rambut – gunting!* ‘Yesterday I bought *anu* – the one used for haircut – scissors!’

In my view, this word, which is derived from Javanese, is used as a kind of word-search filler during the process of communication, and cannot be categorized as a demonstrative. In *Malesbanget.com Kamus*, an online slang dictionary, *anu* is described as an informal word that has 13 functions; one of them is to describe something unknown (see <http://www.malesbanget.com/kamus/definisi.php?kata=anu> for examples).

## 2. CONCLUSION

To sum up, although *TBBBI* does not provide a syntactic distinction between demonstrative pronouns and demonstrative determiners, the demonstratives *itu* and *ini* illustrated in the book cover two main functional functions: situational use and modifying use. A situational demonstrative is described as a pronominal, while a modifying use as an attributive. As an attributive, the

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demonstrative can have three different functions: situational, generic, and anaphoric.

One important thing that I have addressed in this paper is the issue of an existing confusion of how the demonstrative pronouns and demonstrative determiners are defined in *TBBBI*. In my view, a pronominal cannot have an attributive function. Thus, there should be a syntactic distinction between *itu* and *ini* as demonstrative pronouns (or pronominals) and *itu* and *ini* as demonstrative determiners. Demonstrative pronouns act as head nouns and they usually have reference, while demonstrative determiners modify nouns or noun phrases and thus are not referential. It is the modified noun or noun phrase that may refer to a referent, and not the determiner itself.

Another thing that needs attention is the word *anu*, which is claimed to be a deictic pronominal in *TBBBI*. In my view, the word should not be categorized as a pronominal. *Anu* is an informal word that is often used to mark information flow in spoken language.

Last but not least, based on the above discussion, it is then high time that the section on the demonstratives in the *TBBBI* be updated.

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